

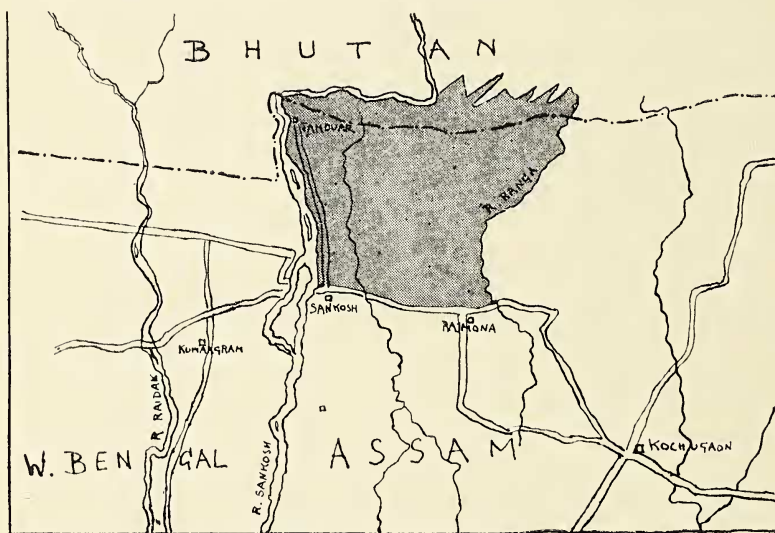
MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

1. A NEW SPECIES OF LANGUR IN ASSAM

(With a sketch map)

For many years a golden-coloured langur has been noticed on the eastern bank of the Sankosh River in Assam, near the Bhutan border. It had been seen by several tea-planter naturalists in the Bengal Dooars, and was known to them as the 'Sankosh Langur'.

In particular, H. E. Tyndale and A. V. Pullan mentioned the existence of this langur to me several years ago, and they referred to the extraordinary fact that it had never been seen on the Bengal side of the Sankosh River, which forms the boundary between Assam and Bengal. Nor had it been seen near the Raidak River, which is the next river to the west of the Sankosh.



Scale— $\frac{1}{2}$ Miles

KNOWN RANGE OF PRESBYTIS GEEI

I looked for this golden langur while I was up the Manas River in November 1949, and again in February/March 1952, but without success though I found a troupe of Capped Langurs, *Trachypithecus pileatus* (Blyth), on the 1952 trip and was able to cine film them.

In November 1953 I made a trip with friends to the rivers Aie and Sankosh. While staying at the Jamduar Forest Rest House on the Sankosh, near the Bhutan border, I was able to observe and film in colour these golden or 'Sankosh' langurs on November 17th, 20th and 21st. On 17th I came across a troupe of them rather suddenly on a

hillside near the river, about two miles north of the bungalow, and saw about 12 langurs though there may have been more.

On 20th and 21st a troupe of them was encountered about one mile north of the bungalow numbering 30 to 40, feeding on the fruit (and leaves?) of *Terminalia belerica*—local names *bohora* and *bhamra*. They were shy creatures and usually kept some 70-80 feet distant, often remaining in the shade. At one time I told my two men to wait motionless while I tried to film two or three of these golden langurs a short distance away. Then followed a great commotion, and I saw a very large langur, possibly the leader, swing down branch by branch till it was only a few feet away from my men, who were very scared but remained in the same spot. Apparently this was a 'sabre-rattling' or feint attack, as the langur quickly returned to the tree-tops.

Two of my companions on this trip, while fishing on the Sankosh, told me they saw another troupe of these golden langurs some four or five miles downstream, actually on the river bed crossing from a *chaponi* (island) as they bounded across the stones and disappeared into the forest.

I have been informed by B. Mitchell, who has camped in many parts of that district of Assam, that he has seen a troupe of 40-50 of these golden langurs close to the Jamduar bungalow, and smaller troupes about five miles to the south, and very small troupes of 10-15 still further away to the south-west, near the Raimona Forest Rest House. He has also, he says, seen a troupe of about 25 of them on the west bank of the Ranga River, but none to the east of the Ranga.

All the places referred to above, which comprise the known range of this golden langur, are within an area of not more than about 56 square miles, extending from the east bank of the Sankosh River to the west bank of the Ranga River, and from the Sankosh-Raimona road in the south to the Bhutan border (or further?) in the north.

As for a general description, these golden langurs appear to be similar to other langurs, except that the tail is longer and slightly tassellated and the coat is an almost uniform deep cream colour in dull light and bright golden in sunlight. The face is black. The coat down the sides, where the hair is longer, appears sometimes to be darker, almost red in colour. The young appear to be similar to the adults, though perhaps a little lighter in colour.

I was not able to secure any still photographs of these langurs, but succeeded in taking about 70 feet of 16 mm. colour cine film of them as they moved about the tree-tops.

In August 1954 I reported the existence of these golden langurs to Dr. W. C. Osman Hill of the Zoological Society of London, a leading authority on the Primates, and he considered that they might be a new species. Again I reported their existence to the Zoological Survey of India in January 1955, and I suggested that their Survey Party, then working in Bengal, should visit Jamduar in order to collect specimens for identification.

This Survey Party led by Mr. H. Khajuria duly visited the area and collected six specimens in April of this year, and the description

and report of this Party is now awaited with interest, as this golden langur may be a species entirely new to science.

OATING P.O.,
ASSAM,
August 11, 1955.

E. P. GEE

[We understand from Mr. Khajuria of the Zoological Survey of India that his description of this new species of langur, which he has named *Presbytis geei*, will shortly be published in *Annals and Magazine of Natural History*—Eds.]

2. MONKEYS AND PANTHER

With reference to the first Miscellaneous Note in Volume 52, No. 4, the following extract from an account in my diary of what appears to be another good example of 'mass hysteria' amongst langurs in the presence of panther may be of interest to readers of the *Journal*. It refers to an incident near Tanakpur which I recorded in November 1939.

'Late one afternoon I was sauntering quietly down a jungle path near the forest edge. Suddenly I froze in my tracks, for meandering towards me was a really fine chital stag. I hadn't the slightest wish to shoot him; rather did I feel like bursting into laughter for he was mooning along the path seemingly without a care in the world, occasionally inclining his aristocratic head to one side or the other as if he were aware of its beauty; occasionally he nuzzled a strand of grass leaning across his path. He was not forty yards away, yet quite oblivious of my presence and so taken up with his dreaming that he performed a little sideways dance, lowered his head in mock battle, and then walked on as nonchalantly as before. His preoccupation was quite ludicrous to see, but it might well have proved his undoing.

Some fifteen yards to his left was a narrow belt of shisham trees, near the summits of which a dozen or so langurs were nibbling the young shoots and watching my movements with but little concern. On the chital's immediate right was a wall of tall thatching grass seven or eight feet high and stretching back some fifty yards to the edge of the sal trees. Without a moment's notice pandemonium broke loose amongst the monkeys. Never was such unbridled panic, and why they forsook the safety of the shisham trees God alone knows. With volleys of grunts, squeals, and frenzied chatterings they burst in all directions like a startled covey of quail, surged across the path and through the tall grass in an effort to reach the main forest. So taken up was I with this amazing stampede that for an instant I forgot the stag. When once more I glanced down the path, he had melted from my ken. But even as I pondered on his disappearance, from out the elephant-grass there burst through the clamour an awe-inspiring sigh. I can only describe it as a sigh, a sigh which was indeed all breath and little noise and yet seemed to shake the air. It was followed (or was it preceded?—in the confusion I forget which)